

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 06 TEL AVIV 003517

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

Israel Radio reported that Israel's National Security Adviser Giora Eiland has written a confidential letter to all branches of the government, saying that it is not certain whether the government is prepared for the disengagement. Eiland reportedly wrote that the situation was a "mess." A senior official in the Construction and Housing Ministry was quoted as saying in an interview with Jerusalem Post that almost half of the Jewish families in Gaza are willing to relocate to the Nitzan and northern Ashkelon area. All media quoted Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz as saying Monday that if settlers refuse to hand over their army-issue weapons to the IDF ahead of the evacuation, there will be no choice but to take them by force. Leading media reported that Michael Eitan (Likud), the chairman of the Knesset's Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee, announced Monday the opening of a hotline to address settler complaints about the violation of their human rights as they protest the evacuation. The media reported that Yahad Knesset Member Zahava Gal-On told Eitan he was making political use of his position.

Ha'aretz reported that Israel has offered the PA to lay a rail line linking the Gaza Strip and West Bank that would enable passage between the two areas after the disengagement. According to the proposal, the tracks would run from the Erez checkpoint in the northern part of the Gaza Strip to the Tarqumiya crossing near Hebron.

Israel Radio reported that James Wolfensohn, the special envoy for the Quartet on the Gaza disengagement, will arrive today for a 5-day visit, in which he will discuss coordination of the disengagement with the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships. The radio reported on the failure last night of Israeli-Palestinian talks, quoting Palestinian sources as saying that Israel refused to hand over to the PA maps detailing the location of settlements and settlement infrastructure in Gush Katif.

Maariv bannered a report authored by senior Foreign Ministry officials, which recommends that Israel should start negotiations with Syria after the implementation of the disengagement. The officials reportedly cited signals from Damascus, according to which Israel could reach an arrangement with Syria without fully withdrawing from the Golan. The Foreign Ministry team also recommended that Israel name an ambassador to the PA and that a multinational force be stationed in the areas from which Israel will pull out during the disengagement. Yediot also mentions the report.

Israel Radio and IDF Radio reported that three or four Qassam rockets fell on Sderot this morning. Hamas claimed responsibility for the firing. Leading media reported that this morning Marouh Kamil, a senior Islamic Jihad commander in the Jenin area, was killed and an IDF soldier was lightly wounded during a fire exchange near Jenin. A second Palestinian was killed in the shootout. IDF rejected claims made by Palestinian sources according to which he was an innocent passer-by.

Citing an appendix to Attorney Talia Sasson's report on the settler outposts, Ha'aretz reported that the Construction and Housing Ministry allocated at least 70

million shekels (at current rates, about USD 16 million) to build infrastructure and erect public structures in 82 illegal outposts in the West Bank during the prime ministerial terms of Binyamin Netanyahu (1996-1999) and Ariel Sharon (2001-2004). Ha'aretz reported that on Monday, Interior Minister Ophir Pines-Paz slammed government policy on illegal outposts, following the report in Ha'aretz of defense establishment figures showing that illegal construction is ongoing.

Jerusalem Post reported that on Monday, U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Kurtzer awarded the Victor J. Goldberg International Institute of Education Prize for Peace in the Middle East to professors Dan Bar-On and Sami Adwan, for their project, "Learning Each Other's Historical Narrative," which engaged Israeli and Palestinian teachers and teenagers to study each other's pasts.

Jerusalem Post reported that Knesset Member Effi Eitam (National Religious Zionist Renewal Party) arrived in Israel on Monday with a delegation of some 100 Gush Katif supporters from the U.S.

Citing news agencies, Yediot reported that the Venezuelan authorities announced on Monday that they have seized five Israel-bound missiles. The newspaper cited Venezuela's state prosecution as saying that the missiles apparently arrived from Colombia, and quoted Venezuelan sources as saying that they are intended to be installed on F-16 and Mirage fighter planes. Yediot reported that the Foreign Ministry declined to comment on the affair.

Major media reported that the Foreign Ministry is organizing an emergency rescue mission for Israelis in La Paz, Bolivia, which is beset by internal strife.

Mideast:

Summary:

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "The disengagement plan is not perfect.... [But] the entire world awaits it.... Sharon is the only one who is capable of doing this type of task."

Veteran print and TV journalist Dan Margalit wrote in Maariv: "While one can accept [outgoing IDF chief of staff Moshe Ya'alon's] opinion that Israel needs to teach its sons that they were born into an embattled society and that the establishment of a Palestinian state must be prevented, other alternatives should also be examined

Senior op-ed writer Akiya Eldar opined in left-leaning, independent Ha'aretz: "The Americans have realized that in reply to the 'no' to what is outside the line [i.e. the boundaries of the settlements], there will be those who will say 'yes' to what is inside the line, and see in this a historical recognition by the United States of the entire settlement project."

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Often, delay is used in Middle East politics to ensure that something is forgotten."

Ha'aretz editorialized: "The Jerusalem Municipality plans to demolish approximately 90 Arab homes that were built without permits in Silwan.... A decision by the mayor to demolish homes would undoubtedly cause a major uproar and constitute an obstacle in the face of the attempts to renew the peace process."

Block Quotes:

I. "The Easiest Thing To Do Is To Criticize"

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (June 7): "The disengagement plan is not perfect.... [But] there is no alternative to it. It has become a fait accompli; the entire world awaits it.... Sharon is the only one who is capable of doing this type of task. It is his final historic role to play. He understands that. All of the others are going to have to make do with an essay in a book [by Ha'aretz columnist Ari Shavit] and a headline in the newspaper. The most infuriating of all is the newest doomsday prophet, Moshe (Nostradamus) Ya'alon.... Let's

remind everyone what we had here up until a few months ago. Blood was flowing in the streets. Depression. A sense of hopelessness. The economy was in deep recession. The streets were empty. In the meantime the economy has begun to recover, the malls are full, the beaches are teeming, the new terminal at Ben-Gurion Airport is collapsing under the sheer weight of passengers both arriving and departing. Israel's international standing is flourishing at unprecedented levels. Terrorism, even in global figures, has decreased. All of that, no matter what anyone says, and with all due respect to Netanyahu and Ya'alon and even the foreign minister, are the products of disengagement.... There is the so painful, agonizing human issue at stake as well. It is not easy to decide, it is not easy to carry out, it is not entirely clear what the end result will be. But that is what the leaders are for: for those kinds of decisions. For criticism and advice we have all the rest."

II. "Generals Make Mistakes"

Veteran print and TV journalist Dan Margalit wrote in Maariv (June 7): "The dire view of the Palestinian front as it is perceived by Moshe Ya'alon is worth being examined. What the outgoing chief of staff explained to Ari Shavit from Ha'aretz is, essentially, that Israel is going to have to live by its sword for all of eternity. His opinion is immensely important.... [But] while one can accept his opinion that Israel needs to teach its sons that they were born into an embattled society and that the establishment of a Palestinian state must be prevented, other alternatives should also be examined.... A peace-seeking nation must sit with its sabers ready and use them while entrenched behind a defensive shield, but it must also feel willing to discuss every course of action to reduce the volume of violence, beginning with a unilateral step that is born of want of any other choice, via the Oslo accords, Camp David 2000, the Geneva agreement and the road map. Each one of those options is preferable to Ya'alon's scenario. But, more than that: inherent in each of them is the possibility of fixing Ya'alon's vision, even if at this juncture in time it is a most reasonable analysis of the current political reality."

III. "No Oversight in Sight"

Senior op-ed writer Akiva Eldar opined in left-leaning, independent Ha'aretz (June 7): "American Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who will be coming to Israel in a few days' time, will be able to form up-close impressions of the building momentum in the settlements. It is not certain she will want to. Rice was still national security adviser when she agreed with Weisglass on the dispatch of a team of American experts to define the boundaries of the settlements.... Two sources who are involved in the issue, among them a fairly senior minister, propose the following explanation for the cancellation of the surveyors' visit: the Americans have realized that in reply to the 'no' to what is outside the line, there will be those who will say 'yes' to what is inside the line, and see in this a historical recognition by the United States of the entire settlement project. The celebrations surrounding the interpretation of President George W. Bush's recognition of the concentrations of Jewish population in the West Bank sufficed for them."

IV. "Delay and Deception"

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (June 7): "Abbas may be making the mistake of thinking he can use the kind of tricks that work in dealing with the West: forgetfulness and deception. Often, delay is used in Middle East politics to ensure that something is forgotten.... [For example,] those accused of the attack [on a U.S. convoy in Gaza in October 2003] were allowed to 'escape' from a Palestinian jail. No action has apparently been taken since then by the Palestinian Authority to apprehend or punish them. Abbas goes to the White House and gets USD 50 million in direct aid. This is typical of the whole story of how terrorism goes unpunished, is forgotten and its lessons are ignored. Hamas, however, has a longer memory than America and is not going to let Abbas postpone the Palestinian elections forever.... Rather than act against terrorists or challenge the prevailing Palestinian worldview, Abbas once again wants Israel to solve his problem by withdrawing from the Gaza Strip. He hopes this will be perceived by Palestinians as a victory for

his leadership. Hamas, for its part, will seek to present the withdrawal as a victory for its terrorist campaign and a reason to support its candidates."

IV. "Political Destruction"

Ha'aretz editorialized (June 7): "The Jerusalem Municipality plans to demolish approximately 90 Arab homes that were built without permits in Silwan ([Hebrew:] Kfar Hashiloah), south of the Old City's walls. The homes constitute an entire neighborhood ... that is home to some 1,000 residents. The story first broke in Ha'aretz a week ago, and Deputy Interior Minister Ruhama Avraham said in response that while razing the homes may indeed lead to unrest in East Jerusalem, 'The government has no intention of capitulating to law-breakers'.... For years, settlers have tried, with great success, to acquire Arab assets in the area and create a Jewish neighborhood there.... The issue is, first and foremost, a political one. A decision by the mayor to demolish homes would undoubtedly cause a major uproar and constitute an obstacle in the face of the attempts to renew the peace process. This is the principal consideration that the mayor must take into account."

KURTZER